

Equality Impact Assessment

Summary

Name of Policy or practice	Neonatal Care Leave Policy		
New Policy or Revision	New		
Policy Owner (role)	Head of Human Resources		
Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion	September 2025		
Agreed Schedule Review Date	September 2028	Additional review date (Action review date)	N/A

Action Plan

This section is completed at the end of the Equality Impact Assessment. Due to the importance of embedding equality in SQA through our actions the Action Plan will be the focus and record of ongoing actions.

Explain how you will monitor and record the actual impact on equality groups, including how the evidence can be revisited to measure the actual impact.

Required Actions	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
Review on a quarterly basis of employment law, case law and legislative changes, and equalities updates (including reviewing EHRC website).	People Advisory & Resourcing Manager	Continuing	
Review and assess all employee lifecycle data on an annual basis.	People Operations & Analytics Manager	Continuing	
Continue to review and assess SQA's equality mainstreaming report every two years.	People Reward and Equalities Manager	Continuing	
Continue to review and assess SQA's workforce equality monitoring report.	People Reward and Equalities Manager	Continuing	

Policy Aims

What is the rationale for this policy or practice?
This policy outlines the entitlement for employees of SQA to take time off if their newborn baby requires neonatal care. It establishes the eligibility criteria, duration of leave, pay details, and the responsibilities of employees, managers, and HR.
What evidence is there to support the implementation or development of this policy or practice?
Every year, over 90,000 babies are cared for in neonatal units in the UK because they have either been born prematurely (before 37 weeks of pregnancy), or full term (after 37 weeks) but sick. This means that around 1 in 7 babies born in the UK each year are admitted onto neonatal units. (Source: https://www.bliss.org.uk/research-campaigns/neonatal-care-statistics) We have developed the policy in line with the: • Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023 • Neonatal Care Leave and Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2025 • Statutory Neonatal Care Pay (General) Regulations 2025
What are the aims of this policy or practice?
To reflect legislative changes for the new Neonatal Care (Leave and Pay) Act 2023 which received Royal Assent on 24 May 2023 and will come into force in April 2025. The key provisions of this policy are as follows: • Employees are eligible for Neonatal Care Leave from their first day of employment. To qualify for Statutory Neonatal Care Pay, an employee must have been with SQA for at least 26 weeks and meet minimum average weekly earnings criteria. The baby must have been born on or after 6 April 2025, and spend at least seven continuous days in neonatal care. • Eligible employees can take up to 12 weeks of Neonatal Care Leave. This is calculated as one week of leave for every seven full and continuous days the baby spends in neonatal care. The leave must be taken within 68 weeks (approximately 16 months) of the baby's birth. • Eligible employees will receive Statutory Neonatal Care Pay. The weekly rate is £187.18 (as of April 2025) or 90% of the employee's average weekly earnings, whichever is lower. This pay is subject to tax and National Insurance deductions. • Neonatal Care Leave and Pay are separate and in addition to other statutory leave entitlements (e.g., maternity, adoption, or paternity leave). ◦ If an employee is already on maternity or adoption leave, neonatal leave must be taken after that entitlement ends. ◦ If an employee is on Shared Parental Leave or Statutory Paternity Leave, neonatal leave can be taken more flexibly, before, during, or after those periods. • The notice period for taking leave varies depending on whether the baby is still in care. Employees are entitled to return to their substantive role with the same terms and conditions after their leave.

- Annual leave, public holidays, and pension contributions will continue to accrue during paid periods of neonatal care leave.

The policy itself is divided into two discrete sections:

Policy Structure:

1: Part A – Policy detail.

2: Part B – Procedures for SQA managers / employees to follow.

How is the content of these aims relevant to equality groups?

This policy is a positive step that meets and, in terms of inclusivity (same-sex couples, adoption, surrogacy), clearly embraces the legislation. It should advance equality, particularly for employees of all genders and sexual orientations who are new parents facing crisis.

Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?

This policy has been developed in consultation with SQA's recognised Trades Unions, Unite and Unison, and in line with SQA Recognition Agreement.

In addition, as this is an internal policy, SQA has asked for feedback from internal employee network groups in relation to equality impacts groups. These employee network groups include:

- ACE (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity) Network.
- SQA Disability Network.
- SQA Rainbow Network.
- Women's Network.

Evidence of Stakeholder Engagement:

Trade Union Consultation Review Group (Policy Review Group):

Members of SQA Human Resources department and trade union representatives from *Unite the Union* and *Unison* meet in SQA via the PRG. SQA's trade union representatives are also given statutory time off to attend relevant training, meetings and other information gathering activities as supported in our union framework agreement.

Evidence of all meeting minutes, actions and consultation undertaken with the PRG group (including Equality considerations in respect of all policies, activities and functions) is detailed on a dedicated SQA shared resources site.

What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?

Age

Table 1.1: Age

Age bracket	2021 (number)	2021 %	2022 (number)	2022 %	2023 (number)	2023 %	2024 (number)	2024 %	Difference (number)	Difference %
16–24	49	4.93%	36	3.47%	36	3.31%	20	1.88%	-29	-3.05%
25–29	73	7.35%	105	10.14%	134	12.32%	122	11.44%	49	4.09%
30–34	96	9.67%	95	9.17%	103	9.47%	106	9.94%	10	0.27%
35–39	146	14.70%	144	13.90%	138	12.68%	132	12.38%	-14	-2.32%
40–44	146	14.70%	150	14.48%	161	14.80%	159	14.92%	13	0.22%
45–49	113	11.38%	124	11.97%	133	12.22%	152	14.26%	39	2.88%
50–54	131	13.19%	126	12.16%	128	11.76%	120	11.26%	-11	-1.93%
55–59	122	12.29%	122	11.78%	134	12.32%	138	12.95%	16	0.66%
60–64	81	8.16%	102	9.85%	97	8.92%	100	9.38%	19	1.22%
65+	36	3.63%	32	3.09%	24	2.21%	17	1.59%	-19	-2.04%
Total	993	100 %	1036	100 %	1088	100 %	1066	100 %	73	0.00%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023-25

Table 1.1 shows the age profile of the organisation from 2021 to 2024

In all four years since 2021, 63.79% or more of staff are between the ages of 35 and 59. The 16–24 and 65+ age brackets had the smallest percentage of staff. In 2024, those within these age brackets made up 3.47% of the organisation. We note that this is a 5.09% decrease across these two age groups since 2021.

The ONS states that women turning 18 in 2025 are likely to have an average of one child by the age of 35 – unlike their mothers' generation, which had an average of one child per woman by the time they were 31.

(Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages>)

Disability

Table 3.1: Disability

Disability	2021 (number)	2021 %	2022 (number)	2022 %	2023 (number)	2023 %	2024 (number)	2024 %	Difference (number)	Difference %
No	683	68.78%	697	67.28%	718	65.99%	677	63.51%	-6	-5.27%
Not specified	152	15.31%	184	17.76%	200	18.38%	212	19.89%	60	4.58%
Prefer not to say	76	7.65%	72	6.95%	73	6.71%	67	6.29%	-9	-1.36%
Yes	82	8.26%	83	8.01%	97	8.92%	110	10.32%	28	2.06%
Total	993	100%	1036	100%	1088	100%	1066	100%	73	7.35%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023-25

Table 3.1 shows the composition of the disability self-reporting categories for the period from 2021 to 2024.

Analysis of disability data by grade between 2021 and 2024 identified no significant trends. In both 2023 and 2024, grade 5 (11.86% and 15.25%) had the highest percentage of staff declaring a disability.

Race

Table 7.1: Race

Ethnicity	2021 (number)	2021 %	2022 (number)	2022 %	2023 (number)	2023 %	2024 (number)	2024 %
African, Scottish African or British African	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%	< 5	< 0.46%	< 5	< 0.47%
Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian	24	2.42%	25	2.41%	28	2.57%	30	2.81%
Caribbean or Black	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%	< 5	< 0.46%	< 5	< 0.47%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%	< 5	< 0.46%	< 5	< 0.47%
Not specified	101	10.17%	122	11.78%	116	10.66%	97	9.10%
Other ethnic group	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%	< 5	< 0.46%	< 5	< 0.47%
Prefer not to say	34	3.42%	30	2.90%	34	3.13%	26	2.44%
White	825	83.08%	849	81.95%	896	82.35%	897	84.15%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023-25

Table 7.1 shows the ethnic minority background of staff within the organisation for the period from 2021 to 2024.

Over the period between 2021 and 2024 there has been an increase of 1.00% in staff declaring they are from a minority ethnic background. In 2023 over 3.50% of staff have declared they were from a minority ethnic background (3.86%) and 2024 saw the number of staff declaring they are from a minority ethnic background increasing to 4.32%.

Analysis conducted by Bliss, highlights that ethnic minority groups are more likely to benefit from the entitlement as, neonatal mortality rates in babies whose mothers are of white ethnicity have decreased between, whereas babies born to mothers of Asian/Asian British, Black/Black British ethnicity have increased between.

Certain ethnic groups are far more likely to have larger families (three or more children) than the White British population and therefore more likely to have a child that requires neonatal leave:

- The share of families with three or more children varies from 14% in White British families to:
 - 41% in Pakistani families.
 - 38% in Bangladeshi families.

(Source: <https://www.bliss.org.uk/news/2023/latest-ons-statistics-highlight-rise-in-preterm-birth-and-deepening-ethnic-disparity>)

Religion or Belief	Table 8.1: Religion or belief								
	Religion or belief	2021 (number)	2021 %	2022 (number)	2022 %	2023 (number)	2023 %	2024 (number)	2024 %
	Another religion or body	6	0.60%	6	0.58%	9	0.83%	6	0.56%
	Buddhist	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%	<= 5	<= 0.46%	<= 5	<= 0.47%
	Church of Scotland	127	12.79%	125	12.07%	119	10.94%	112	10.51%
	Hindu	7	0.70%	8	0.77%	11	1.01%	13	1.22%
	Jewish	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%	<= 5	<= 0.46%	–	0.00%
	Muslim	10	1.01%	11	1.06%	10	0.92%	11	1.03%
	None	462	46.53%	489	47.20%	540	49.63%	544	51.03%
	Not specified	102	10.27%	123	11.87%	117	10.75%	102	9.57%
	Other Christian	44	4.43%	44	4.25%	45	4.14%	47	4.41%
	Pagan	–	–	–	–	–	0.00%	<= 5	<= 0.47%
	Prefer not to say	103	10.37%	103	9.94%	104	9.56%	97	9.10%
	Roman Catholic	129	12.99%	123	11.87%	127	11.67%	128	12.01%
	Sikh	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%	–	0.00%	–	0.00%
Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023-25									
Table 8.1 shows the religion, belief or non-belief status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2021 to 2024.									
The percentage of staff declaring their religion, belief or non-belief increased by 0.70% between 2021 and 2024. The percentage of those declaring has remained relatively stable within each category over the last four years, with less than a 1.00% difference for all religion, belief or non-belief categories. There are two exceptions to this, which are for the ‘prefer not to say’ category, which has decreased 1.27% over the four-year period, and the ‘none’ category, which has seen an increase of 4.50% since 2021. This mirrors the findings from the 2022 Scottish Census that the majority of people in Scotland had no religion.									
Sex									

Table 9.1: Sex

Sex	2021 (number)	2021 %	2022 (number)	2022 %	2023 (number)	2023 %	2024 (number)	2024 %	Difference (number)	Difference %
Female	618	62.24%	644	62.16%	679	62.41%	664	62.29%	46	0.05%
Male	375	37.76%	392	37.84%	409	37.59%	402	37.71%	27	-0.05%
SQA	993	100%	1036	100%	1088	100%	1066	100%	73	0.00%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023-25

Table 9.1 shows the distribution of staff within the organisation by sex for the period from 2021 to 2024. The split between females and males within the organisation has remained consistent over the period from 2021 to 2024, with less than a 1.00% change.

In 2024, more than half (53.8%) of lone parents were lone mothers with at least one dependent child, although this is a smaller proportion than in 2014 (60.3%)

Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2024>

59% of unpaid carers are women (Census 2021). Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men. More women than men provide high intensity care at ages when they would expect to be in paid work

Source: Carers UK <https://www.carersuk.org/media/wqbpnce4/women-and-unpaid-caring-in-scotland-briefing-final.pdf>

There are 1.25 million sandwich carers in the UK. These are people caring for an older relative as well as bringing up a family. 68% (850,743) are women.

Source: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/care-in-crisis/breaking-point-report/>

**Sexual
Orientation**

Table 10.1: Sexual orientation

Sexual Orientation	2023 (number)	2023 %	2024 (number)	2024 %
Bisexual	24	2.21%	28	2.63%
Gay or lesbian	39	3.58%	36	3.38%
Heterosexual / straight	717	65.90%	729	68.39%
Not specified	207	19.03%	181	16.98%
Other sexual orientation	9	0.83%	10	0.94%
Prefer not to say	92	8.46%	82	7.69%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023-25

Table 10.1 shows the composition of staff sexual orientation for 2023 and 2024. We have moved to reporting sexual orientation in line with the 2022 Scottish Census categories and therefore are unable to provide a comparison between the last reporting period and this current reporting period.

**Gender Re-
assignment
(Gender identity
and transgender)**

Due to the low number of staff reporting as transgender or describing their gender identity 'in another way', we are unable to publish further data in relation to gender reassignment or gender identity. This data is, however, monitored internally.

Marriage/Civil Partnership

Table 5.1: Relationship status

Relationship status	2021 (number)	2021 %	2022 (number)	2022 %	2023 (number)	2023 %	2024 (number)	2024 %
No	377	37.97%	396	38.22%	464	42.65%	433	40.62%
Not specified	102	10.27%	127	12.26%	118	10.85%	102	9.57%
Prefer not to say	55	5.54%	59	5.69%	61	5.61%	54	5.07%
Yes	459	46.22%	454	43.82%	445	40.90%	477	44.75%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023-25

Table 5.1 shows the marriage and civil partnership status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2021 to 2024.

The percentage of staff declaring they are married or in a civil partnership was 40.90% in 2023 and 44.75% in 2024. The percentage of staff declaring they are married or in a civil partnership has remained consistent over the last four years.

Pregnancy / Maternity

Table 6.1: Pregnancy and maternity

Pregnancy and maternity	2021 (number)	2021 %	2022 (number)	2022 %	2023 (number)	2023 %	2024 (number)	2024 %
Contract ended as planned	1	3.33%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
Due to return to work	0	0.00%	11	40.00%	5	27.78%	12	48.00%
Resigned	0	0.00%	1	4.00%	1	5.56%	0	0.00%
Returned to work	29	96.67%	14	56.00%	12	66.67%	13	52.00%
Total	30	100%	26	100%	18	100%	25	100%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2023-25

	Table 6.1 details the number of staff who have taken maternity leave, whether they are still on maternity leave (due to return to work), have returned to work following maternity leave, resigned following maternity leave, or their fixed-term contract ended (contract ended as planned). The rate of those who return to work following a period of maternity leave is greater than 50.0% for all four years noted in Table 6.1. In 2023 all directorates and reporting areas, except for the People directorate, had at least one member of staff who had taken maternity leave, and in 2024 all directorates and reporting areas, except for the Accreditation and Finance and Corporate Services had at least one member of staff who had taken maternity leave. 50% or more of staff who have taken maternity leave between 2021 and 2023 have been in grade 6 or above. new parents of premature babies can have longer term impacts, this policy tries to provide some of that support and stability (Source: https://evidence.nihr.ac.uk/alert/neonatal-care-parents-may-need-long-term-psychological-support/)
Care experience (where relevant)	SQA does not currently collect Care Experience data.

Impact and Opportunities for Action

The impact that a policy or practice has on an equality group may be different and this requires to be recorded. The impact may not always be negative. Actions are taken to address any differential impact, and include actions to mitigate against any negative impact, to advance equality and to foster good relations between groups.

Each section contains questions for each equality group. These questions are here to support consideration; however, you can provide further detail. Focus initially on the equality groups that would be affected by this policy. If you do not consider that certain equality groups would be affected by this policy, you may leave these sections.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The Policy is aimed at parents whose children spend a prolonged period in neonatal care so will benefit those employees falling into this group, who are more likely to be between 25 and 39 brackets based on demographics of new parents. However, there is no age-related criterion for this Policy and all employee parents of neonatal children (with a stay of seven or more days) would be able to access the new entitlement.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Neonatal Care Leave Policy and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Age.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Age groups.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	The Policy is designed to have a positive impact on all parents which find themselves in the position of tending to their child in neonatal care. The Policy is unlikely to create any barriers to equality in terms of an employee's disability.

	The policy supports parents of disabled babies who require neonatal care (which is common for premature or sick newborns). It allows for time to manage complex medical coordination and care needs. It also supports disabled employees (the parents) by reducing the stress and need to return to work prematurely while their child is critically ill. Consideration must be given to disability discrimination by association - a premature baby that requires care may be considered disabled and staff are protected by discrimination by association. However, clear links are made to additional SQA leave policies to support ongoing care. Conclusion: Probable positive impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	The policy states “We will ensure throughout this procedure that we do not unfairly discriminate against anyone because of a protected characteristic. Further details can be found in our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.”
	Foster good relations
	<u>The outcomes of the policy should continue to be monitored for any trends that suggests employees may be disadvantaged directly or indirectly as a result of their <i>Disability</i>.</u>
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	By providing this leave, the policy directly addresses a need that disproportionately affects these groups, working to advance equality of opportunity and outcomes.
	Conclusion: Probable positive impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure. There is no empirical evidence to indicate that this policy affects employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Race or Ethnicity

	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Race or Ethnicity. The ACE Network exists to foster good relations, provide support, create an overall sense of belonging that may not exist elsewhere in the organisation. It also exists with the aim of sharing experiences, providing feedback and recommendations as to how SQA can promote a more diverse and inclusive workplace. We encourage colleagues, regardless of race or ethnicity, to participate in and support the network, with the understanding that we will work together towards achieving our aims and objectives.'
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Religion or Belief	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	All SQA employees from all Religions / Beliefs are entitled to use and access the Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There is no empirical evidence to indicate that this policy affects employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Religion or Philosophical Belief System.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Race or Ethnicity. The ACE Network exists to foster good relations, provide support, create an overall sense of belonging that may not exist elsewhere in the organisation. It also exists with the aim of sharing experiences, providing feedback and recommendations as to how SQA can promote a more diverse and inclusive workplace. We encourage colleagues, regardless of race or ethnicity, to participate in and support the network, with the understanding that we will work together towards achieving our aims and objectives.'

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sex	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Both fathers/partners, mothers and parents in a surrogacy arrangement will benefit from having access to the entitlement, subject to meeting the other eligible criterion.
	This policy promotes shared parental responsibility by ensuring <i>both</i> parents/partners are entitled to the same leave and pay amount (up to 12 weeks), which helps challenge traditional gender roles in caregiving.
	The leave is available to each eligible parent, promoting equality between men and women by ensuring both parents have the right to time off to care for their child. This helps encourage an equal sharing of caregiving responsibilities.
	The entitlement is inclusive of same-sex couples and parents defined by their sex or sexual orientation (e.g., fathers, partners, intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement, and adoptive parents), ensuring definitions of "parent" are gender-neutral and inclusive of all family structures.
	Conclusion: Probable positive impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Sex
	Foster good relations
	SQA undertakes a public sector equality duty report every two years which assists us to maintain equal opportunities, best practice and identify barriers to workforce equality and diversity. SQA also undertakes a people survey which recognise the value and contribution of all our colleagues. The survey is carried out quarterly and aims to continue to build on areas for improvement In SQA, the Women's network 'provides a welcoming space for women across the organisation. Through open meetings and events there are opportunities to get to know one another, offer and receive support, and influence SQA policy development in areas of equality and inclusion. This network is exploring exciting developments such as informal mentoring and liaising with other staff networks.

	Speaking to members of this network directly will help SQA measure the impact of this policy and explore ways we can improve its direction and profile in SQA. Specifically, to question whether the policy impacts individuals of a particular sex negatively.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 The policy includes a gender-neutral definition of 'partner' ("of the same or a different sex") and includes adoptive and surrogacy cases, ensuring inclusion for same-sex couples. The proposed changes are unlikely to create any barriers to equality as a result, nor will they disproportionately negatively affect any group because of their sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Furthermore, the policy is consistent with existing parental rights whereby biological parents, partners (including same-sex partners), adopters and intended parents (in surrogacy arrangements) are eligible for the leave and pay. Conclusion: Probable positive impact Advance equality of opportunity All SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Sexual Orientation. Foster good relations The Rainbow Network is SQA's lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning (LGBTQ+) colleague network. Measuring the impact of the policy by the intention of asking for feedback through EMRG process to the Rainbow network could assist in helping to foster good relations between employees of different sexual orientations or LGBTQ+ status.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010 The proposed changes are unlikely to create any barriers to equality as a result, nor will they disproportionately negatively affect any group because of their sexual orientation or gender reassignment. Furthermore, the policy is consistent with existing parental rights whereby biological parents, partners (including same-sex partners), adopters and intended parents (in surrogacy arrangements) are eligible for the leave and pay. Conclusion: Probable neutral impact

	Advance equality of opportunity
	SQA has a Gender Identity and Transitioning at Work policy which support all colleagues.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between people of different Gender Identities or who are LGBTQ+ however there is no concerns about it will negatively impact these colleagues either. The entitlement is inclusive of same-sex couples and parents defined by their sex or sexual orientation (e.g., fathers, partners, intended parents in a surrogacy arrangement, and adoptive parents), ensuring definitions of "parent" are gender-neutral and inclusive of all family structures.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Marriage/Civil Partnership	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	Parents of newborns do not have to be in a marriage or civil partnership to qualify.
	The entitlement applies to employees who are the baby's parent, which may include married or civil partners.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of their Marital Status.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees of different Marital Status. No further recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010

	The design of the Policy is to give parents an entitlement to replace the leave, where their child has spent time in neonatal care. As this will be provided in addition to existing leave, affected mothers will benefit from the entitlement. This also applies to any individual who would have the main responsibility for the child. The Policy directly supports pregnant women and new mothers. Conclusion: Probable positive impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees less favourably, on the grounds of Pregnancy/Maternity.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees that are Pregnant or on Maternity.
	No recommendations are made in respect of this in relation to this policy.
Considered by SQA	General Equality Duty
Care experience (where relevant)	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	While there is currently no evidence to suggest that Care Experience colleagues are placed at a disadvantage compared to other colleagues (or vice versa), it is recommended that data is collected and an analysis, by Care Experience, be performed of the 'lifecycle' of colleagues to identify any adverse trends and consider what support for growth and performance is needed.
	Conclusion: Probable neutral impact
	Advance equality of opportunity
	All SQA employees are entitled to use and access the Neonatal Care Leave Policy and Procedure and there is no evidence to indicate that this policy could affect employees differently or less favourably, on the grounds of Care Experience. The absence of evidence should be rectified, if possible, by collection of data relating to Care Experience.
	Foster good relations
	There is no evidence to indicate that this policy currently fosters good relations between employees that are Care Experienced.

Rationale

If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact and are not putting in place actions to mitigate against this, please explain how this is objectively justified.

Not applicable.